
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Still Time to Protect Against Flu in Kent County

GRAND RAPIDS – Flu season has arrived early for many in Kent County. Statistics through the month of December show a much higher than typical caseload at Kent County hospitals for influenza and flu-like illnesses. The confirmed number of cases for September–December 2012 is 242, up from 6 confirmed cases for the same period in 2011. The Kent County Health Department says the single best way to protect against the flu is by getting vaccinated.

“This season, 98% of the confirmed flu cases are either Type A or Type B strains of Influenza, which are both found in this year’s vaccine” says Cathy Raeovsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “In the coming days, many children will be going back to school after the holiday break, so we anticipate the numbers will continue to climb. If you haven’t gotten a flu shot or nasal mist for you or your family, now is an ideal time to vaccinate.” The vaccination can take about two weeks to become effective.

Signs and symptoms of flu include fever (or feeling feverish/chills), cough and/or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue (very tired), vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Not everyone with flu will have a fever, or experience all of the symptoms. Flu season typically peaks after the holiday season, but this year, Kent County is seeing a higher number of cases earlier than usual.

Michigan Department of Community Health has reported two pediatric deaths in Michigan last month due to the flu. The flu can cause serious complications in pregnant women, people who have weakened immune systems, in the very young and in the elderly. Infants six months of age or younger cannot get a flu vaccine, so it is recommended that parents, family members and people who care for them receive a vaccination.

Flu vaccines for children and adults are safe, and we have plenty of injection (\$25) and nasal mist (\$32) available right now at the Kent County Health Department. Be sure to check out the Kent County Health Department website, <http://www.stickittotheflu.com/> to learn more about flu vaccinations, prevention tips and treatment, or call (616) 632-7200 to make an appointment.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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